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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8777
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DHAKA
DIA WASHDC
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000954

CINCPAC FOR FPA
LONDON FOR JOHNSON/PARIS FOR ALLEGRONE
KARACHI FOR LAWTON

E.O. 12356:DECL:OADR
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [UNHRC](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: THE LTTE: WHAT WE ARE SAYING AND WHO WE
ARE SAYING IT TO

REFS: A) 93 STATE 107728 B) 93 COLOMBO 1850

1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST--PLEASE SEE PARA 9.

2. (C) SUMMARY. POST IS WORKING THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES TO SEND THE MESSAGE THAT THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM (LTTE) SHOULD BECOME CONSTRUCTIVELY ENGAGED IN FINDING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO SRI LANKA'S ETHNIC CONFLICT. WE ARE CALLING ON THE LTTE AS WELL AS THE GOVERNMENT TO FOCUS INITIALLY ON MODEST CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES, RATHER THAN BROAD POLITICAL ISSUES. USG POLICY CONTINUES TO FAVOR A PEACEFUL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WHICH PRESERVES SRI LANKA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND PROVIDES APPROPRIATE GUARANTEES FOR MINORITY RIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

3. (C) WE CONTINUE TO WORK THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES TO GET THE TALKING POINTS CONTAINED REF A (REPEATED PARA 8) ACROSS TO THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM (LTTE). WE HAVE GIVEN THE MESSAGE TO A NUMBER OF PROMINENT CITIZENS OF THE LTTE-CONTROLLED JAFFNA PENINSULA WHO HAVE PASSED THROUGH COLOMBO IN RECENT MONTHS. THEY INCLUDE ACADEMICIANS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA, PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CLERGY AND A LEADING DOCTOR FROM JAFFNA HOSPITAL. MOST RECENTLY, THE AMBASSADOR MET THE GOVERNMENT AGENT FROM JAFFNA, A TAMIL PUBLIC SERVANT WHO MAINTAINS A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TIGERS. WE ALSO DELIVERED OUR POINTS TO A JAFFNA-BOUND DELEGATION FROM THE UK-BASED "QUAKER PEACE AND SERVICE" NGO.

4. (C) THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERMEDIARIES IS LIMITED BY THE RECLUSIVE NATURE OF THE LTTE LEADERSHIP AND THE UNDERSTANDABLE RELUCTANCE OF JAFFNA RESIDENTS TO MAKE WAVES WITH THE TIGERS. NEVERTHELESS, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF DIRECT USG CONTACT WITH THE TIGERS, THIS IS THE BEST ALTERNATIVE FOR GETTING OUR MESSAGE ACROSS. WE PLAN TO INTENSIFY THESE EFFORTS BY SEEKING OUT SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE ACCESS TO (AND PERHAPS INFLUENCE WITH) THE LTTE. THESE INCLUDE THE CATHOLIC BISHOP OF JAFFNA AND THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF JAFFNA UNIVERSITY.

5. (C) IN ADDITION TO THE TALKING POINTS CONTAINED

REF A, WE ARE EMPHASIZING THE NEED TO BUILD CREDIBILITY PRIOR TO ANY SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF LARGER POLITICAL ISSUES. IN OUR VIEW, THERE IS CURRENTLY SUCH A LARGE RESERVOIR OF SUSPICION AND MISTRUST BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LTTE THAT HASTY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES COULD ACTUALLY SET THE PEACE PROCESS BACK. PUBLIC POSTURING ASIDE, NEITHER THE GOVERNMENT NOR THE LTTE IS INTERESTED IN TALKS RIGHT NOW, UNLESS IT IS TO DISCUSS THE TERMS OF THE OTHER SIDE'S CAPITULATION.

¶6. (C) WE BELIEVE THAT ALL PARTIES--GOVERNMENT, LTTE, AND NON-LTTE TAMILS--SHOULD FOCUS INITIALLY ON PRACTICAL PROBLEM-SOLVING, LEAVING ASIDE THE LARGER POLITICAL ISSUES. (A NOTE OF CAUTION: WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE LTTE IS THE ONLY TAMIL PLAYER THAT MATTERS MILITARILY, WE DO NOT ACCEPT THE LTTE AS THE SOLE SPOKESMAN OF THE TAMIL PEOPLE; AN EVENTUAL POLITICAL SOLUTION WILL HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NON-TIGER TAMILS AS WELL AS THE LTTE.) THESE CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE A SERIOUS COMMITMENT TO FINDING A POLITICAL SOLUTION AND UPHOLDING ANY EVENTUAL AGREEMENT. WE ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, ENCOURAGING THE GSL TO PUT INTO PRACTICE ITS COMMITMENT TO DEVOLVE POWER AT THE PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LEVELS.

¶7. (LOU WITH THE ABOVE IN MIND, WE PLAN TO ADD THE FOLOWING POINTS TO OUR "DIALOGUE" WITH THE LTTE:

0 WE ENCOURAGE THE LTTE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IT IS SERIOUS ABOUT FINDING A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE WAR. THIS COULD INCLUDE, FOR EXAMPLE, GOODWILL GESTURES SUCH AS PRISONER RELEASES, ALLOWING FREE MOVEMENT OF CIVILIANS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND LTTE-CONTROLLED AREAS, OR A TEMPORARY, UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE.

0 WE ENCOURAGE THE LTTE AND THE GOVERNMENT TO SEARCH FOR AREAS OF POTENTIAL AGREEMENT WHICH COULD BE NEGOTIATED PRIOR TO ANY DISCUSSION OF LARGER POLITICAL ISSUES. THESE COULD BE USED TO BUILD THE CONFIDENCE NECESSARY FOR MORE COMPREHENSIVE FUTURE AGREEMENTS.

¶8. (LOLL) THE NEW TALKING POINTS WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO THE POINTS WE HAVE BEEN USING SINCE LAST YEAR:

0 THE U.S. SUPPORTS A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO SRI LANKA'S ETHNIC PROBLEMS WHICH PRESERVES SRI LANKA AS ONE COUNTRY AND PROVIDES MINORITIES WITH PROTECTION AND DIGNITY.

0 SRI LANKANS OF ALL ETHNIC GROUPS AND POLITICAL PERSUASIONS NEED TO WORK OUT AMONG THEMSELVES THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WILL RESOLVE THIS TRAGIC CONFLICT WHILE PRESERVING THE INTEGRITY OF SRI LANKA AND THE RIGHT OF ITS PEOPLE TO LIVE IN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FREEDOM.

0 BOTH SIDES MUST BE WILLING TO DISCUSS ALL RELEVANT ISSUES AND SEEK COMPROMISE. NOTHING OF IMPORTANCE SHOULD BE LEFT OFF THE TABLE.

0 WE HAVE SPOKEN OUT VIGOROUSLY AGAINST GSL HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, AND CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE ITS PERFORMANCE.

0 WE ALSO CONDEMN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY OTHERS, NOTABLY THE LTTE. WE CONDEMN IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THE LTTE'S ATTACKS ON INNOCENT MUSLIM AND SINHALESE CIVILIANS.

¶9. (C) POST RECOMMENDS CONTINUATION OF OUR CURRENT POLICY OF RESTRICTING SUBSTANTIVE CONTACTS WITH THE LTTE AND LTTE SYMPATHIZERS TO EMBASSY COLOMBO AND

THE DEPARTMENT. IF OTHER MISSIONS ARE APPROACHED BY LTTE REPRESENTATIVES OR PERSONS CLAIMING TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE LTTE, WE ASK THAT THEY SEEK GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT. HOWEVER, SHOULD THE USDEL IN GENEVA BE APPROACHED IN THE COURSE OF THE ONGOING UNHRC MEETING BY TAMIL EXPATRIATE GROUPS SEEKING TO PLEAD THEIR CAUSE, WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZE THE USDEL TO MAKE USE OF THE ABOVE TALKING POINTS.

SCHAFER